

## Evaluation of the Attraction of the Iraqi Market for Food Products of Ilam Province

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the attraction of Ilam province food products in Iraqi market. This Study in terms of data collection is descriptive and type of survey, and is considered as the applied research. The population of this research is experts, and managers of food companies producing food products. For finite population sampling using the sample volume formula the sample size is obtained  $n = 96$ . Sampling in this study is randomizing. The tool for data collection was a questionnaire and for its validity in terms of academics and technical experts employed and also for reliability using Cronbach's alpha of 0.89 was obtained. It shows the approval of the questionnaire that is desired. Finally, the data set into SPSS software and was analyzed by t test. Results of competitive attractiveness, charm and charisma adaptive demand for Ilam food manufacturers in the Iraqi market are lower than average. The attractiveness access for Ilam food manufacturers in Iraqi market is above average.

**Keywords:** charm, accessibility, demanding attractiveness, competitive attractiveness, adaptive charm

### Introduction

Expanding markets and increasing communication between different countries has led the business environment of economic activities faced with many changes. And, this is a concept that is closely associated with the process of economic globalization. (Haghshenas and Kashani, 2011). The geography and climate of the region will cause its susceptibility. The important advantage is the ability to cause the growth, development, and economic progress. One of the main advantages of Ilam province is the development of food products. Since Ilam province has 428 km of common borders with Iraq, therefore, as a good target market, for the export of food products it is a great opportunity for growth. On the other hand Non- oil exports are very important to achieve sustainable economic growth in our country. Therefore, to develop the non-oil exports, detecting exports items of food industry, is of special importance (Askari, 2011). Today, the supply of goods in foreign markets is done in competitive conditions and consumer massively high power selection, recognizing foreign consumer's markets and their tastes are very important. In this competitive market, the winners are those who are able to identify consumer's characteristics and expectations with a strategic plan in all areas (production, marketing ...) and offer the needed goods. (Valibeigay, 2006). In order to develop the export of food products of Ilam province, this study examines the attractiveness of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products, which has lots of benefits.

### Statement of problem

Selecting the target market is one of the most important decisions in any business. Market size, market growth rate, and competitive forces in the market, profit and . . . are only part of the criteria for the companies determining which target market to choose. However, researches shows that despite the multitude of variables, and the range of their decisions, many companies still set

their target market on the basis of short-term profitability criteria. (Rojooei and Shi-e -zadeh, 2007). Decisions are made for export feed selecting the export market, after passing through two steps to reach the boundary of the overall environment of international marketing. At this point, you should seek to identify market opportunities outside the country, and analyze the markets, for selecting attractive they should pay attention to a variety of factors, including product demand, market size, competitive intensity, income, geographical factors and demands according to the market requirements and should evaluate the markets based on that. In the international marketing, choosing the target market process is considered as the most sensitive activities. Therefore, as the realization of market choice causes the export, to identify products with export advantages, are also required to fulfill this important as well. Also, Ilam province due to neighboring Iraq has ability to export differently. Currently, there are 200 countries in the world, and it does not seem any corporate resources necessary to achieve profitability in all these countries. Therefore, the choice of market, it is essential for the future success of firms. The need to assess the needs of foreign markets has been discussed by many researchers. (Daglas Vegrij, 1992, Kumar , 1993). And several models have been suggested for evaluating and selecting international markets. (Valvord , 1980; Kavosgy, and Varagas - Karkamv , 1985; Ruth, 1987; Walsh , 1993; Sarabya, 1996; Robertson, 2000; Koch, 2003). However, empirical researches show that there is a gap between the models is presented and practical research (Farral, 1998, Rahman, 2003). In addition, limited research has been done in this area. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the key question, “how is the attractiveness of the Iraqi market for Ilam food crops?”

### **Significance of the study**

The study of marketing literature indicates that international marketers are faced with failures (Knight, 1995, Daljyk and Hayj Bloom, 1996). One of the reasons for that is poor choice of foreign market. This mistake occurs because of inadequate or inappropriate evaluation of selected foreign markets. This mistake costs much heavier than the systematic evaluation and selection of appropriate market to enter foreign markets. The importance and the need for systematic evaluation and selection of target markets are considered by many researchers, and models have been proposed for the evaluation and selection of foreign markets, that can help to assess the attractiveness and target market, and can be valuable for analyzing industries and international markets. That, in turn, is an effective step in the formulation of appropriate strategies for industries including food processing industry. And the assessment of Iranian exporters can adopt more rational decisions. Therefore, evaluating the attractiveness of the Iraqi market for food products deemed to be essential to Ilam province that caused necessarily to carry out this research.

### **Research objectives**

The main objective is evaluating the attractiveness of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products:

The secondary objectives:

- evaluating the attractiveness of the Iraqi market competition for Ilam food products.
- Evaluating the implementation of the charm of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products.
- Evaluating the attractiveness of the Iraqi market access for Ilam food products.
- Evaluating the attractiveness of the Iraqi market demand for food products in Ilam.

### **Research questions**

The main question:

How is the attractiveness of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products?

Sub-questions:

- How is the attractiveness of competition of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products?

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- How is the attractiveness of matching of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products?
- How is the attractiveness of the accessibility of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products?
- How is the attractiveness of the market demand of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products?

## **Theoretical Research**

### ***Attraction***

The attractiveness of a product refers to the abilities of product to benefit from attracting clients, and it is divided to four, the attractiveness of appeal, the attractiveness of accessibility, the comparative attractiveness, and the attractiveness of competition. (Sharafi, V., 1391).

*The attractiveness of appeal:* The attractiveness of appeal implies the demand for goods and services within the sector. This demand is affected by the related indicators such as per capita consumption, type of product, Macroeconomic indicators such as GDP per capita, and other macro-economic indicators such as the attitude of the destination country to the products of the original country. Accordingly, the dimensions influencing the attractiveness of demand are: indicators related to product, macroeconomic indicators, macro-economic indicators.

Related indicators of the desired product states that if the market is large enough to create an opportunity for the company for profitability. If the target is not large enough now, does it grow well, and is it attractive enough according to the firm's long-term strategy? Indicators related to product demand as a factor influencing the attractiveness, in the second stage of screening models, Model (Wood and Rabrston, 2000) as the "capacity of the market" model (Symkyn and Dibb, 1998) as the "market size" and "growth" model Kagan Entitled "The current size of the market and its expected potential growth " model (Kayoda, 1993) as the "market size" and model (Rahman, 2003) as the "micro-level indicators" model (Koch, 2001) as the "capacity market" model (Mackam, 1974) entitled "size section"and" consumption rate "model (Sarabya, 1996) entitled" study of Sub-profit "are taken into consideration.

Macroeconomic indicators of the suitability of economic conditions in terms of per capita GDP target market conditions, foreign exchange, inflation and employment status refers to the level of economic development. Macroeconomic indicators as a factor affecting the attractiveness of demand in the first stage of screening models as "macroeconomic indicators" model (Wood and Robertson, 2000) titled, "economic factors" model (Symkyn and Dibb, 1998) entitled "Environmental Factors "model (Rahman, 2003) as the" Macro-level indicators "is taken into consideration. Other macro-economic refers to the indicators in the country of destination to people familiar with the product type and coordination product of culture, religion and traditions of the destination country; Customers' attitudes of target country with product and product conformity with the target population age pyramid. Other macro-economic indicators are taken into consideration as a factor influencing the attraction demand model (Rahman, 2003) as "Other macroeconomic indicators ".

*The attraction of availability:* The attraction of availability refers to tariff and non-tariff restrictions and limitations to such costs, transport costs for goods and services of the destination country. As much as the above limitations can be less and delivering goods and services at lower prices to the country of destination, the attractiveness of availability will increase. If the attractiveness of availability is very low, virtually some options, such as the possibility of entering the market through exports will be impossible. Accordingly, as figure 2-19 shows the components influencing the attractiveness of availability are:

### ***Legal restrictions***

Confines can be categorized to three-parts; tariff restrictions, non-tariff restrictions, and other legal barriers. It refers to legal restrictions to tariff barriers, such as tariffs, taxes on imports and

preferential tariffs, non-tariff barriers such as product standards imposed by foreign countries (product packaging, tags, safety rules, etc.), documentation requirements, procedures and import quotas imposed by foreign governments and other legal restrictions, such as restrictions on travel to the country, preventive law and regulation of advertising and promotion in foreign countries, patents, Copyright, and supporting the brand. Legal restrictions are taken into consideration as factors influencing the attractiveness of availability in the initial process of screening as the "legal parameters" model (Wood and Robertson, 2000) as "legal factors" model (Symkyn and Dibb, 1998) as "easy access the "market model and Kagan as "market access considerations for importers ". Cost constraints to competitive prices and product refer to the firm's target markets. As much as the direct costs associated with bringing the product to the consumer's country of origin, such as the cost of shipping and insurance costs and indirect costs such as the costs of promotion and communication activities in the destination country, and the cost of attendance at exhibitions in the destination country is less expensive, firms will be able to bring their products to consumers with better prices. Cost constraints as a factor influencing the attractiveness of availability is taken into consideration in the model of (Wood and Robertson, 2000) as the "infrastructure elements" Kagan model as "transportation costs" (Model Rahman, 2003) as "cost indices "model (Koch, 2001) entitled "risk and efficiency calculation methods, procedures and controlling costs of marketing "model (Sarabya, 1996) entitled "access reasonable cost ". Political stability and political factors within the target market refers to diplomatic relations with the country of destination. The political stability in the destination market, is due to political authority in the foreign country, the degree of freedom of political dissidents in foreign countries, the level of labor unrest, local revolts, and unofficial wars. Positive diplomatic relations with the country of destination to domestic firms' easier access to foreign markets and political stability conducive to sustainable access to markets they are targeting. Political factors are taken into consideration as an influence on the attractiveness of availability in the initial screening process of making a "political criteria" and the model (Wood and Robertson 2000) as "political factors".

*The attraction of adaptation:* The attractiveness of adaptation, implies the extent of changes needed in the marketing mix and marketing processes. This attractiveness is influenced directly by structural parameters such as the adaptation of the legal system, adaptation of the business culture, cultural adaptation and matching with distribution system (mental and spiritual) of the foreign market. Accordingly, so long as the goods and services produced by the firm are mixed and changed less, and marketing processes presented in the target market, the market will be more attractive to implement. Thus, as figure 2-19 shows the components influencing the attractiveness of implementation are:

#### ***Structural parameters***

Structural parameters refer to adjustment and adaptation of the structure of the legal system and business culture of the country of destination. These parameters are taken into consideration as factors influencing the attractiveness of adaptation in the model (Rahman, 2003) entitled "structural adaptation factors". Related indicators mix marketing refers to tools coordinating marketing with the target markets. As much as the mix marketing, used in domestic markets, can be used with fewer changes in foreign markets, adapted marketing mix is more attractive. This index consists of the required changes in product characteristics (packaging, design, etc.), changes in promotion activities, changes in price, changes in the distribution and implementation of the brand with the demands of the clients. This index is taken into consideration as a factor influencing the detailed steps of the screening process, in the model (Wood and Robertson, 2000) entitled "the costs of adaptation" in the "market capacity" and in the model of Kagan as "product-market fitness". Indicators, related with human and financial resources, including available human and financial

resources, are the capabilities of marketing and non-marketing capabilities in the destination country, and management commitment to success in the country of destination. These indicators show the extent to which firms can utilize their resources and competitive advantages in foreign markets. This factor is taken into consideration in the model (Rahman, 2003) as "international commercial capabilities of the firm" and in the "model Koch, 2001) as "available resources "and" international competition of firms ". Cultural distance refers to cultural differences of the Iranian market and cultural integrity in the destination market. Cultural differences are affected by the lifestyle of conformity of the foreign market, foreign market Farsi speaking communities, Favoring and promoting activities of existing sanctions. Cultural integration refers to multiple groupings of race, religion.... of coherence between different cultural groups in the target market and the differences between life style and customs of different groups the target market. Cultural distance is considered as a factor influencing the attractiveness of implementing the first stage of the screening process in the model (Wood and Robertson, 2000) as "cultural factors" and the model (Koch, 2001) entitled "similarity / proximity to foreign markets'.

*The attractiveness of completion:* The attractiveness of completion refers to the attraction competitive structure, the firm's current position in the destination country and the policy of destination country. As much as the attractiveness of the structure competition of firms in the target country is stronger, the attractiveness of completion will be more for that firm in that country. Moreover, the attractiveness of the destination country is under the direct influence of domestic politics such as political stability law, patent law, advertising and promotion, etc. The component associated with attractiveness of the competition are the structure of competitive, the role of firm, and the policy divisions

The structure of competition, consist of analyzing industry and the forces affecting it. This structure is strongly influenced by the quality of competition, number of competitors, a variety of brand integration industry, the bargaining power of buyers in the country of destination, type of product standard offered in the destination country. Analysis of the forces affecting the industry is particularly taken into consideration in Porter's model. Also, the structure of competition is considered as a factor influencing the attractiveness of competing models (Wood and Robertson, 2000) as "competition" model (Symkyn and Dibb, 1998), with the titles "The intensity of competition", "The risk of goods substitution, "Barriers to Entry "and" bargaining power of customers "; Kagan model entitled "Evaluation of the quality and potential market competition" model (Sarabya, 1996) as the "ability to compete with competitors' models (Kayvda, 1993) entitled "Strategies of actual and potential competitors, ". The firm position in the market indicates the current strength of the firm customer service, which affects the effectiveness of competition in the market. The position of firm as an attractive factor influencing competition is taken into consideration in the model of Wood and Robertson (2000) entitled "Market share, market coverage and the growth rate of foreign competitors in the competition "in the model (Symkyn and Dibb, 1998) as "market share". Policies refer to laws and regulations to promote competition within the sector in the destination country, the level of government control over the trade and membership or non-membership of the destination country in the WTO. Internal politics of race as a factor influencing the attractiveness of competition is taken into consideration in the model of Wood and Robertson (2000) entitled "The internal policies" and model of Rahman (2003) entitled "Sector policy".

### **Research Methodology**

This research is the applied one, and in terms of data collection method is - descriptive survey. The population of this research is experts, managers of food companies producing food products. For finite population sampling using sample size on basis of the formula  $n = 96$  is

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obtained. Random sampling is a sampling method in this study. The data collection tool was a questionnaire, for its validity in terms of technology academic experts and other experts were used and also for reliability using Cronbach's alpha (0.89) is obtained. That indicates the desired reliability confirmed by a questionnaire. Table 1 indicates the information about the questionnaire.

**Table 1: Information about the questionnaire**

Variable	Dimensions	Questions
	The attractiveness of demand	1-8
Attractiveness of the market	The attractiveness of accessibility	9-16
	The attractiveness of adaptation	17-24
	The attractiveness of competition	25-32

### Validity and reliability

To assess the validity of the questionnaire professors and experts' opinions were used; ten experts have already approved it. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability of the questionnaire the results of which are outlined below.

**Table 2. Results of Cronbach's alpha**

Variable	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
The attractiveness of demand	90%
The attractiveness of accessibility	87%
The attractiveness of adaptation	88%
The attractiveness of competition	91%
Total Inventory	89%

Because Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all variables is greater than 70% of the reliability of the questionnaire is also supported.

### Testing research hypotheses

**Research question:** How is the attractiveness of market competition of Iraqi market for Ilam food?

The statistical hypotheses were formulated:

*The attractiveness of competition in the Iraqi market for food products is below the average.*

*Attractiveness of competition in the Iraqi market for food products is greater than or equal to the average.*

The results of the analysis of the questionnaire data to test the above hypothesis using a population mean are expressed in the following tables.

**Table 3: Results of statistical hypothesis testing, hypothesis 1**

Standard error of measurement	Standard deviation	Mean	df	Result
%2741	%47192	1.3249	96	The attractiveness of competition is less than average

Among the components of the attractiveness of competition, firm was in the lowest possible position, the second was the structure of completion, and the third was domestic policies. The test results of the descriptive statistics of the sample show that average (3249/1) is smaller than 3. However, these findings should be accepted or rejected through the statistical deduction.

**Table 4: Results of inferential statistical hypothesis testing**

The mean difference			Sig.	df	t	dimension
The upper limit	The lower limit					
.1446	-.0461		0.000	77	-4.435	The attractiveness of competition

Based on the above results of the t-statistic is -4.435, degrees of freedom equal to (df =77) and significant level is (sig= 0.000). Therefore, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and it can be deduced that the average attractiveness competition of Ilam food companies in the Iraqi market is not equal with the attractiveness of competition tested in this research. And because the upper limit and lower limit are both negative, then the mean is smaller than the average value of the test. Therefore, the attractiveness of competition of Ilam food companies in the Iraqi market was below the average, so we can say that (t) have a weak attractiveness of competition.

**Research question 2:** How is the attractiveness of adaptation of Iraqi market for Ilam food products?

To answer this question, statistical hypotheses were formulated.

*The attractiveness of adaptation of Iraqi market for Ilam food products is lower than average.*

*The attractiveness of adaptation of Iraqi market for Ilam food products to is more than average.*

The results of the analysis of questionnaire data in order to test the above hypothesis test for a population using the mean test, is expressed in the following tables.

**Table 5: Results of descriptive statistics related to hypothesis testing of hypothesis 2**

Standard error of measurement	Standard deviation	Mean	df	The result
0.3917	0.35226	2.1761	78	The attractiveness of adaptation is lower than average

The descriptive statistics test results show that the sample mean (2/1761) is less than 3. Among the components of attractiveness of adaptation of the Iraqi market two components of structural indexes and cultural indexes had the attractiveness of higher than average. But two elements of mix marketing and marketing processes are much lower than average of interest (1.0733). Which has been adapted the attractiveness of adaptation to appeal the lower limit of the average. To accept or reject the findings need to be tested through inferential statistics.

Based on the results of the t-statistic is (-3/177) DT is equal to (77) and significant level (sig= /000). Because the significance level is less than 5% error level, so H<sub>0</sub> is rejected. And it can be claimed in the error by 5 percent the average of attractiveness of adaptation of Ilam food

companies in the Iraqi market is not equal to average of attractiveness of adaptation tested (3) . And because the upper limit and lower limit are both negative, then the mean is smaller than the average value of the test. Therefore, the attractiveness of adaptation of Ilam food products producers companies in the Iraqi market is less than average. It means that the attractiveness of adaptation of food manufacturing companies is too weak.

**Table 6: Results of inferential hypothesis testing of the attractiveness of adaptation**

Confidence interval		Difference	The significance level	df	t	Dimension
The upper limit	The lower limit	Average				
-/2276	-/355		0/000	77	3/177	The attractiveness of adaptation

**Research question 3:** How is the attractiveness of accessibility of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products?

To answer this question, statistical hypotheses were formulated:

Attractiveness of accessibility of the Iraqi market for Ilam food products is lower than average.

The attractiveness of accessibility of Iraqi market for Ilam food products is more than the average.

The results of the analysis of the questionnaire data to test the above hypothesis using a population mean are expressed in the following tables.

**Table 7: Results of Descriptive statistics related to the hypothesis 3**

Standard error of measurement	Standard deviation	Mean	Df	The result
/04166	0/33179	3/4234	78	The attractiveness of the accessibility is more than the average

**Table 8: Results of inferential statistics, hypothesis testing the attractiveness of accessibility**

Confidence interval		Difference of Average	The significance level	DT	t	Dimension
The upper limit	The lower limit					
-.422	.0169		0.000	77	4.219	The attractiveness of accessibility

Test results of the descriptive statistics show that the sample mean (3/4234) is more than 3. Among the components of the attractiveness of accessibility market in Iraq and components of legal



restrictions and political and costs indexes received above average. This has caused the attractiveness of accessibility to be in higher level of the average.

To accept or reject the findings, it is necessary to be tested through inferential statistics.

Based on the table above, the t-statistic is equal to 4.219 and significant level (Sig= .000). Because the significance level is less than 5% error level, so  $H_0$  is rejected. It can be claimed at 5% error level the average of attractiveness of adaptation of Ilam food products producers companies in the Iraqi market is not equal to the attractiveness of adaptation tested (3). And because the top and bottom are both positive, then the mean is smaller than the average value of the test. Therefore, the attractiveness of adaptation of Ilam food products producers companies in the Iraqi market is lower than average. It means that the attractiveness of the food manufacturing companies for Iraqi market is suitable.

**Research Question 4:** How is the attractiveness of demand of Iraq for Ilam food products?

To answer this question, statistical hypotheses were formulated:

*The attractiveness of demand of Iraqi market for Ilam food products is lower than average.*

*The attractiveness of demand of Iraq for Ilam food products is more than average.*

The results of the analysis of the questionnaire data to test the above hypothesis using a population mean are expressed in the following tables

**Table 9: Results of descriptive statistical hypothesis testing, hypothesis 4**

Standard error of measurement	Standard deviation	Mean	df	The result
0.4726	0.4917	2.2662	78	The attractiveness of demand is lower than average

Test results of descriptive statistics show that of the sample mean (2/2662) is less than 3. Among the components of attractiveness of demand in the Iraqi market two components related to the product and macroeconomic indicators are below the moderate level of attractiveness. But non-economic factors such as Coordination major product of culture, religion and traditions of the country of destination as well as the attitude of the government's intentions to the products of Iranian companies have above-average attractiveness.

To accept or reject the findings, it is necessary to be tested through inferential statistics.

**Table 10: Results of inferential hypothesis testing of attractiveness of demand**

Confidence interval		Mean difference	The significance level	df	t	Dimension
The upper limit	The lower limit					
-.145	-.0217		0/000	77	3/542	Attractiveness of demand

Based on the above results of the t-statistic is (-3/542) DT is equal to (77) and significant level is (sig=0/000). Because the significance level is less than 5% error level, therefore  $H_0$  is rejected. It can be claimed that in the 5% error level the average of the attractiveness of demand of Ilam food producers companies in Iraqi market is not equal to the average of attractiveness of demand tested (3). And because the upper limit and lower limit are both negative, then the average is less than the average value of the test. Therefore, the attractiveness of demand of Ilam food

producers in the Iraqi market is lower than average. It means that the attractiveness of demand of food manufacturing companies is lower than the average.

### **The practical recommendations**

1. To enhance the attractiveness of competition the recommendations below are presented.
  - Developing a comprehensive plan to develop the capabilities of competing in companies producing food products.
  - To Form a negotiating team to increase bargaining power in Iraq.
  - Developing programs to increase market share in Iraq.
2. To enhance the attractiveness of adaptation, these recommendations are presented:
  - Designing appropriate mix marketing for Iraq.
  - Design and manufacturing of food products with characteristics consistent with the preferences and tastes of customers in Iraq.
  - Changing the brand of Ilam food products in accordance with the wishes of the Iraqi market.
  - Developing a special promotion program for Iraq.
  - Using different pricing strategies in Iraq.
3. The following suggestions are offered to enhance the attractiveness of accessibility:
  - Formation of a legal committee in order to remove legal restrictions.
  - Regular participation in trade fairs in Iraq.
  - Developing diplomatic relations of provincial officials with Iraq.
4. To enhance the attractiveness of demand following suggestions are offered:
  - To produce products in accordance with the culture, religion and tradition in Iraq.
  - Developing a plan to pursue a positive attitude towards the Iraqi people of Iranian companies and Ilam products.

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